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SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 12 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to refer to the letter dated 11 January 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the Secretary-General.

In his letter, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon once again makes a series of misleading statements calculated to deceive Member States as to the existing state of affairs. These false charges by Lebanon completely ignore Lebanon's legal responsibility for the situation.

The fundamental cause of the situation is the continuing activities of terrorist organizations, like Hizbullah, which commit acts of aggression against Israel with the tolerance, and at times even the encouragement, of the Lebanese Government. Lebanon has a clear duty in regard to international law and under the Charter of the United Nations not to allow its territory to be a base for attacks on Israel, to disarm these groups and to cease all aid and encouragement to them.

As a result of Lebanon's failure to fulfil these responsibilities, Israel is compelled to take defensive measures against these terrorist activities, which are not only supported by Lebanon but directly aided, financially and otherwise, by the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As long as Lebanon illegally supports unprovoked and relentless terrorist attacks against Israel from its territory, it does not come to the United Nations with clean hands. Lebanon should prevent the terror emanating from its territory, and withdraw its refusal to return to the negotiating table with Israel.

Israel has repeatedly stated its willingness to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) in its entirety. In that resolution, the Council did not call only for the withdrawal of Israeli forces, but also for the restoration of international peace and security and the return of the Lebanese Government's effective authority in the area. Lebanon's continued readiness to allow terrorist operations from its soil is totally incompatible with these last two provisions of the resolution. Israel reiterates again its willingness to implement Council resolution 425 (1978) and calls upon the Government of Lebanon to cooperate with Israel in order to restore peace and security along their common border.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 155, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ambassador Dore GOLD
Permanent Representative